

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 6 and 43 are amended, claims 1-5, 11, 13-16, 20, 25, 27-29, 40, 42, 47, and 49-50 are canceled, and claims 51-54 are added herein. Claims 2-4, 12, 17-19, 26, 31, 36, 41, and 48 were previously canceled. With entry of this Amendment, claims 6-10, 21-24, 30, 32-35, 37-39, 43-46, and 51-54 will be pending.

Applicants acknowledge the allowance of claims 7-10, 21-24, 30, 32-35, 37-39, and 44-46.

Claims 6 and 43 have been amended to depend from allowed claims 7 and 44, respectively.

New claim 51 is directed to an apparatus for routing Virtual Tributary (VT) circuits in a SONET network without requiring or utilizing VT cross connections on one or more intermediate Network Elements (NEs), and includes limitations similar to allowed claims 7 and 21. New claims 52-54 depend from claim 51.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned at (408) 399-5608.

Respectfully submitted,



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